Received: 13 November 2021 | Accepted: 19 November 2021

DOI: 10.1111/josi.12488

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

JOURNAL OF Social Issues
A Journal of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

WILEY

Ethnic-racial socialization in the context of the achievement gap discourse

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Abstract

Messages about race and ethnicity are embedded in everyday settings and interactions. Research on ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) commonly centers on relationships between youth and their teachers, parents, and peers as contexts of socialization. We propose another context for ERS: Discourse. We suggest that messages about race and ethnicity are part of larger, uncontested and unacknowledged Discourses—with an uppercase D—which refer to semiotic processes occurring at multiple layers of cultural, ideological, and social contexts. We zero in on the achievement gap discourse (AGD), a prevailing, uncontested and unacknowledged discourse that is rooted in U.S. racial hierarchies. We suggest that messages about ethnicity and race are conveyed to students and teachers through four avenues relevant to the AGD (1) Benchmarks and standards for student learning; (2) Curriculum and pedagogy; (3) Language around educational performance, and (4) Spaces of learning. We conclude with future directions that examine the relation between the AGD and ERS.

KEYWORDS
education, ethnicity, racism

INTRODUCTION

Research on ethnic-racial socialization (ERS), the process by which socialization agents (e.g., parents, teachers) transmit messages about ethnicity and race to children and youth (e.g., Hughes

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et al., 2016), has burgeoned over the last few decades. The focus of studies on ERS has spanned several contexts (e.g., home, school), ethnic/racial groups (e.g., African American, East Asian, White, Latine), and developmental stages (e.g., childhood, adolescence) (e.g., French, et al., 2013; Hughes & Chen, 1999; Hughes, et al., 2009; Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). Scholars tie ERS in micro-settings to broader racial/ethnic hierarchies prevalent in the United States and abroad and focus on parents, peers, and teachers as agents of socialization (e.g., French & Coleman, 2013). What is missing from prior work is an examination of how ERS may be contextualized in discourses that are not explicitly about race but nonetheless reinscribe and perpetuate existing racial hierarchies (Taylor, 2006). We propose that messages about race and ethnicity communicated to students are part of larger, unacknowledged Discourses—with an uppercase D—which refers to semiotic processes occurring at multiple layers of cultural, ideological, and social contexts. Specifically, we propose that the achievement gap Discourse (AGD), a prevalent Discourse in the U.S. rooted in racial and class ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015), conveys meanings about race and ethnicity to students, teachers, and parents. To make our case, we first provide an overview of the AGD, then proceed to discuss how it is a context for ERS.

ACHIEVEMENT GAP DISCOURSE

The notion of achievement gap as Discourse with an uppercase D, as conceptualized by Carey (2014), refers to semiotic processes occurring at multiple layers of cultural, ideological, and social contexts that shape individuals' identities (Bloome & Clark, 2006; Gee, 1996). Proceeding from this definition, the AGD consists of taken-for-granted assumptions held by teachers, policy makers, parents, students, and general laypeople about which knowledge and skillsets are valued and how they are measured in the U.S. education system. The AGD also encompasses daily conversations (or lack thereof) among teachers, policy makers, and students, about which students are expected to do well in school, how students are tracked by perceived ability, and why students of color are disproportionately penalized. By taken-for-granted assumptions we mean a set of unquestioned beliefs about sources of and solutions to achievement gaps that teachers regard as true. An example of a taken-for-granted assumption within the AGD is when teachers assume lack of care, rather than structural or cultural reasons, explains why many parents from impoverished communities may not be intensively involved in children's schooling (Ochoa, 2013). Below, we discuss how the AGD (1) is an *uncontested* and *unacknowledged* discourse; (2) provides language through which to understand ethnic/racial and socioeconomic differences in educational performance; (3) is a type of majoritarian narrative that masks white supremacy; and (4) can be a tool to reinforce racial regularities in educational settings.

First, the AGD is an *uncontested and unacknowledged* discourse that is prevalent in the United States (Carey, 2014). The AGD is uncontested because it is widely accepted among scholars and educators, and it is unacknowledged because its role in perpetuating racial hierarchies goes largely unquestioned (e.g., Kendi, 2016). For instance, a quick Google search for the "achievement gap" yielded 284,000,000 results in less than 1 s. A similar entry on academic search engines across disciplines pooled 551,483 articles and books, 60,976 of mentioned closing the gap. Beyond garnering thousands of citations, efforts to address the achievement gap are amply funded. For instance, millions of dollars are funneled into initiatives at national and state levels to promote educational activities between parents and children that narrow socioeconomic gaps in learning (e.g., Providence Talks; Early Learning Initiative). In contrast to the considerable body of work on sources of and solutions to gaps in academic performance, few publications question the existence of the

achievement gap itself, or tie it to racial hierarchies (Kendi, 2016). Alongside the handful of theoretical critiques (e.g., Kendi, 2016; Kirkland, 2010; Love, 2004) is a recent empirical study that provides compelling evidence of how the AGD perpetuates racial stereotypes. In three randomized controlled experiments, Quinn (2020) found that exposure to news stories about racial gaps in academic achievement exaggerated viewers' deficit stereotypes of Black Americans as lacking education, and increased viewers' implicit stereotyping of Black students as less competent than white students. Such evidence suggests how, given its uncontested and unacknowledged nature, the AGD operates in line with other covert and expansive racialized structures in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Carey, 2014; Dumas, 2016).

Second, the AGD provides the language through which to explain ethnic/racial and socioeconomic gaps in academic achievement. People commonly use labels such as *underperforming, adequate yearly progress* (AYP), *highly qualified, below basic*, and *proficient*, to describe, in value-laden terms, optimal students, educators, and schools. Carey (2014) argues that such terms, common within the AGD, maintain their value because of the symbolic meaning they hold for students, educators, administrators, families, and the broader public.

Third, the AGD is an example of what critical race theory scholars call a majoritarian narrative. Love (2004) has argued that the way in which the achievement gap is constructed and portrayed in popular discourse is the latest incarnation of the white superiority/black inferiority notion, a core feature of majoritarian storytelling. Such majoritarian storytelling, or master narratives, are defined within critical race theory as "bundles of presuppositions, perceived wisdoms, and shared cultural understandings" that people in the position of privilege bring to discussions around race" (Delgado & Stefancic, 1993, p. 462). Majoritarian narratives are constructed and maintained through specific tools used by dominant groups to obscure white privilege in society and enable it to appear "natural." The AGD, thus, can be regarded as a powerful majoritarian narrative through which racial hierarchies are maintained in the United States (Kirkland, 2010; Love, 2004).

As a majoritarian narrative, the AGD employs tools of invisibility, universality, and meritocracy to present academic test scores as neutral and objective while rendering invisible the racial and class ideologies that underpin educational inequities (Love, 2004). What is made invisible in the AGD is the possibility that test score differences reflect hidden realities such as validity of tests, cultural biases in test items, and cultural, social, and economic capital that place white students at an advantage in educational settings. The tool of universality is apparent in how policy makers and teachers perceive the measures used to validate the AGD as normative. Educational content and standards that public schools use, including schools that serve largely students of color, are mostly developed by and about white people, yet presented as universal and objective. Finally, the AGD is regarded as apolitical and based in meritocracy, precluding an analysis of biases in societal structures that create different starting places and subsequent roadblocks for students from different racial/ethnic groups (Love, 2004).

Like many majoritarian narratives, the AGD emphasizes individual characteristics and actions while masking structural oppression and inequities as the root cause of differences in educational outcomes. Such onus on the individual is evident in deficit (e.g., Gorski, 2016) and blaming-the victim-discourses (e.g., Ryan, 1976). Before the term "*achievement gap*" became the dominant label for socioeconomic-based educational inequities, researchers and educators spoke of *deficiencies*, or *cultural deprivations*, to describe intellectual abilities of impoverished children of color, subsequently labeling them "at risk" for failure in school (Ladson-Billings, 2007; Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). In early manifestations of deficit thinking, educators attributed educational gaps to genetics, while current iterations point to cultural practices and parenting values that are at odds with

norms and expectations of U.S. schooling (Valencia, 2012). Deficit discourse is intertwined with blaming-the-victim ideology, whereby impoverished families of color are implicitly faulted for their economic circumstances, regarded as not valuing education, and/or told they are not speaking and interacting with their children in ways that promote school readiness skills (e.g., Hart & Risley, 2003; Ryan, 1976; Valencia, 2012). Both deficit thinking and blaming-the-victim-ideologies function to detract attention away from the analysis of how structural racism shapes opportunities for students' academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2007).

Finally, the AGD can be conceptualized as a tool that reinforces racial regularities in school settings (Hughes & Watford, 2021). Building on Seidman's (1990) concept of "social regularities", Hughes and Watford propose the existence of racial regularities, defined as "persistent patterns in the relative social experiences of, and roles occupied by, two or more racial (or racialized) groups within a setting" (p. 2). In our case, schools with more than one racial group prompt between-group comparisons of test scores, tracking, and disproportionality in disciplinary actions, thereby highlighting the differences in social experiences and relative standing of white students compared with students of color. These comparisons are reflected in daily conversations between administrators, teachers, and students in classrooms and in professional development settings. In this regard, we hypothesize that the persistent casting of ethnic-racial minority students as underperforming in relation to privileged white students within the AGD reinforces racial regularities in educational settings.

ETHNIC-RACIAL SOCIALIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AGD

Discourse theories are useful lenses through which to understand how the AGD can be a context for ERS. According to such theories, individuals and social groups construct ideas about the worldin this case, the meaning of race and ethnicity (e.g., Gee, 1996). Racial/ethnic social categories are created, maintained, and accepted as unquestioned truths by members of society (Foucault, 1969). Most importantly, discourses have material consequences: they do not just produce and reproduce modes of thinking, they "are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behavior, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms, which, at once impose and maintain them" (Foucault, 1980, p. 200). Thus, social constructions of race and ethnicity are embedded in the structures of society that hierarchize, segregate, marginalize, and oppress individuals along racial and ethnic lines.

Taking the perspective that people are often unconscious ventriloquists for larger discourses (Bakhtin, 2010)––they borrow language, along with all of its cultural and ideological baggage, from their communities and larger societal Discourses––we suggest that the AGD is an important context for ERS. Messages about ethnicity and race that children and adolescents receive from socializing agents (e.g., parents, teachers) can take the form of *cultural socialization* (practices that teach children about their racial or ethnic heritage or history), *preparation for bias* (practices that promote children's awareness of discrimination and foster tools to cope with it), *promotion of mistrust* (practices that emphasize the need to be wary of others who are of a different ethnicity or race, but contain no advice for how to cope with discrimination), and *egalitarianism or silence about race* (explicit messages about valuing individual qualities over group membership, or suggesting that everyone is equal) (Hughes, et. al., 2006). Features of ERS vary by ethnic/racial groups (e.g., Huynh & Fuligni, 2008), and shape children's identities and educational outcomes (e.g., French et al., 2013; Hughes et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2020). Importantly, ERS is not a passive

process; students are active agents in accommodating to and resisting messages about race and ethnicity (Hughes & Chen, 1999).

Notably, ERS can occur without necessarily an active agent promoting or omitting messages about ethnicity or race. Implicit socialization theorized by Bourdieu (1977) is particularly relevant to the AGD and ERS. Bourdieu proposed the notion of the habitus, broadly defined as internalized predispositions, actions, perceptions, and attitudes formed during early socialization and reinforced through daily interactions. Such predispositions are largely unconscious, and stem from perceptions of what is possible or unlikely for a particular group in a stratified social world. Thus, everyday interactions in everyday settings, which are organized by larger structures such as systems and discourses, can convey messages to students about ethnicity/race implicitly and daily. For instance, despite being technically colorblind and egalitarian, school policies such as academic tracking and talented and gifted programs often create school segregation by ethnicity/race and can shape students' beliefs about relative ability (Ochoa, 2013).

Below we provide examples of how the AGD is a context for ERS. We focus on schools because they are examples of social systems that draw and redraw racial boundaries in society (Lewis, 2003), thus serving as important contexts for ERS (Saleem & Byrd, 2021). The messages students receive in schools are multilayered and are crucial for the psychosocial and academic development of youth of color (e.g., Watford et al., 2021). We suggest that messages about ethnicity/race are conveyed to students and teachers through four avenues relevant to the AGD (1) Benchmarks and standards for student learning; (2) Curriculum and pedagogy; (3) Language around educational performance, and (4) Spaces of learning.

Benchmarks and standards for student learning

Racial ideologies and color-blind, egalitarian messages inform definitions of what it means to be a successful student within the AGD (Carey, 2014). To standardize student knowledge and ability across states in ways that hold schools and educators accountable, education systems have established definitions of skillsets that are deemed foundational to human development, generalizable across cultures, and measurable using assessments. Despite their potential benefits, benchmarks pertaining to AGD are commonly discussed by educators and policy makers as colorblind: they often ignore the cultural and linguistic repertoires that ethnic/racial minority children bring to the classroom (Kummen, 2011) and equate student ability with standardized testing. Moreover, reducing students' knowledge and abilities to numeric form invites what Gutiérrez (2008) calls "gap gazing". Gap gazing is akin to the white gaze (Paris & Alim, 2014), whereby researchers examine and report racial/ethnic and socioeconomic differences in academic abilities from numerous angles that tend to replicate white middle-class norms of achievement. While researchers often include caveats to generalizability when reporting data on non-representative samples, the education policies and standards based on this research continue to be used across schools with culturally diverse populations. In doing so, we argue, benchmarks and standards reinscribe ethnic/racial hierarchies in the AGD by using the skills of white populations as the standard against which all other communities are measured.

In the context of the AGD, messages about ethnicity and race (particularly those that are colorblind and egalitarian) are conveyed to teachers and staff in pre-service training and professional development settings by administrators, thereby serving as sources of ERS. For instance, in her ethnography of racial discourse around academic achievement in a school in southern California, Ochoa (2013) found that administrators often present to teachers standardized scores, subdivided

by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status, without explanations of the structural, contextual, and cultural factors underpinning those gaps. Without a structural lens, many teachers rely on false dichotomies (biological/cultural) to explain academic performance, and often embrace and perpetuate a rhetoric that endorses racial stereotypes and colorblind discourse. While teacher preparation programs can assist teachers in navigating diverse classrooms––shaping how they understand their students, what they understand about racial/ethnic dynamics in the classroom, and how they apply this knowledge to their own pedagogy (e.g., Brown, 2010; Derman-Sparks & Phillips, 1997)––such programs also frequently endorse color-blind ideology and egalitarian discourse and do not move the needle on deficit thinking (Sleeter, 2017).

Curricula and pedagogy

Curricula are widely discussed in relation to socioeconomic and ethnic/racial gaps in academic performance (e.g., Beecher & Sweeny, 2008), and undergird much of the AGD. Curricula structures what and how content should be taught in classrooms. A critique of existing U.S. curricula within public schools is that they emphasize bodies of knowledge, cultural assets, values, and histories of Western, white communities. Playing on the term "mainstream," Urrieta (2004) refers to the centering of white experiences and histories in schools as whitestream curricula (what is taught), and whitestream pedagogy (how students are taught). Whitestream curricula leave little room for teaching of content in ways that tailor to the interests and perspectives of a culturally and ethnically/racially diverse student body. When ethnic/racial minority students' lived experiences are reflected and centered in a culturally responsive classroom, they are more likely to engage in school, and the achievement gap narrows (Dee & Penner, 2017). Not being worthy of mention in curricula affects students' sense of worth (Urrieta, 2004), and, we argue, reinscribes the AGD that endorses deficit stereotypes about Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Pedagogy, or how curriculum is taught, is also a powerful context for messages about ethnicity and race. For instance, teachers promote color-blindness and egalitarianism in classrooms by either not speaking about or downplaying the role of race in society. Teachers can also convey color-blind messages to students by emphasizing meritocracy during history lessons, thus underscoring an ideology that upholds racial structures (Mitchell, 2013; Solt et al., 2016). Narratives that promote individual agency, hard work, and equality (all facets of the AGD) while denying racial discrimination and structural barriers to success can send messages to minoritized students that their lived experiences of oppression do not factor into their academic performance. Similarly, color-blind messages can limit students' ability to think critically about ethnicity, race and racism and hinder their preparation for bias (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). White teachers are particularly likely to emphasize color-blind messages in relation to their students (e.g., Hazelbaker & Mistry, 2021). Notably, the 2021 right-wing backlash against and censorship of critical race theory illuminates how the act of making visible society's racial hierarchies are perceived as a threat to the whitestream mode of education.

In contrast, culturally responsive pedagogy and curricula, which include works by and about BIPOC communities, promotes cultural socialization (Aldana & Byrd, 2015). Such socialization encourages students to learn about their ethnic/racial heritage and history, promotes cultural customs and traditions, and fosters students' racial and ethnic pride. Similarly, Afrocentric education––which displaces a Eurocentric viewpoint in pedagogy and centers the perspectives and voices of African and African American historical figures––teaches Black youth about their culture and heritage without endorsing a racial hierarchy. In turn, such education promotes not

only cultural socialization but preparation for bias. Examples of Afrocenteric pedagogy are the presence of cultural artifacts (e.g., the drum, the speaking symbol, the Nguzo Saba hanging cloth), celebration of Kwanzaa, curriculum containing works by African American scholars, and/or classroom discussions and readings promoting culturally relevant values and beliefs such as collectivism, pan-Africanism, and Black nationalism (Clarkson & Johnstone, 2011). Another example of cultural socialization in curricula is educulturalism, in which educators use the power of art, literature, narratives, and dance to teach critical thinking about race, power, and social and cultural issues and encourage students to regard history and social activism as integral to their education (Lea & Sims, 2008). In sum, culturally relevant pedagogy equips students with knowledge about diverse social groups, informs their racial attitudes, and promotes positive intergroup relationships (e.g., Brown-Jeffy, & Cooper, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Souto-Manning, 2013). Such strength-based, culturally relevant, and experiential pedagogy has the possibility of reframing the education landscape to represent multiple voices, viewpoints, and values, and to promote racial, ethnic, and cultural pride (Souto-Manning, 2013).

Language around educational performance

Messages about race and ethnicity manifest in the content of communications between students and others in schools, communities, and home (Hope et al., 2015; Hughes et al., 2011; Ochoa, 2013). Within the AGD, these messages are masked as rhetoric filled with value-laden terms that create distinctions between students. These distinctions are maintained through "symbolic boundaries" (Carey, 2014), which sociologists define as conceptual distinctions made by social actors that categorize people, objects, and practices (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Labels such as "underperforming," "not ready to learn," "at risk," "low-functioning," "disadvantaged," "below basic," and "displaying problem behaviors" are disproportionally attributed to minoritized children in educational spaces and become the justification for their placement in lower academic tracks (McDermott, et al., 2006). As such, symbolic boundaries have material consequences: through deficit language, AGD may reinforce existing structures of privilege by maintaining status and capital in the hands of white students and families (Carey, 2014).

The value-laden language of the AGD has consequences for teachers' expectations of students, which further conveys messages about the meaning of race and racial hierarchies to students. For instance, teachers display higher expectations of Asian and white students than African American and Hispanic students (McKown & Weinstein, 2008). Moreover, many teachers hold low expectations for low-income students and feel a reduced sense of responsibility for their learning (e.g., Diamond, et al., 2004; Gershenson, et al., 2016). A recent study documented the cascading effects of research on the language gap––a contested finding by Hart and Risley (2003) suggesting that low-income, minoritized children hear 30 million fewer words in their home environments and have lower vocabulary than children from white middle-class households––on teachers' pedagogy. The study found that educators who internalize deficit thinking around the word gap in their classrooms use the word gap as justification for lowering expectations of their Latine pre-K students (Adair et al., 2017).

In addition to employing racialized labels about student performance, students and teachers commonly employ racialized explanations for the achievement gap. The most prevalent justification draws upon cultural deficiency rhetoric. This explanation frames ethnic/racial minority students as exhibiting a poor work ethic and motivation, or simply lacking grit (e.g., Ochoa, 2013). Such a perspective assumes that low-performing students' families do not value education

and/or have low expectations of their children's academic performance (Valencia, 2012). Cultural deficiency explanations for the achievement gap are ubiquitous in discourses among students, teachers, and parents and endorse racial stereotypes (Ochoa, 2013; Turner et al., 2015; Valencia, 2012). The value-laden terms and explanations for achievement gaps that teachers use serve as powerful messages to students about the meaning of racial/ethnicity in school settings.

Spaces of learning

Messages about ethnicity/race may be socialized in the segregated spaces that emerge from the AGD, where students are sorted across schools, subjects, and abilities (e.g., Conger, 2005). When students are grouped together in the same classroom based on standardized test scores, or when they occupy entirely different learning spaces labeled "honors" or "AP," stereotyped discourses about ethnic-racial differences in academic abilities are reinforced, intergroup relations are limited, and a climate of negative stereotypes, prejudice, and avoidance is fostered (Legette, 2018). With top classes experiencing higher expectations and greater educational opportunities, a binary, racialized, classed, and hierarchical construction of students is likely perpetuated (Ochoa, 2013).

Like racialized spaces, learning subjects are marked as inclusive of specific ethnic/racial groups, thereby communicating messages about the relative status of and meaning attributed to different ethnic/racial groups (e.g., Spencer & Hand, 2015). While African American students are minorities in STEM (Farinde & Lewis, 2012), Asian students are overrepresented and subjected to model minority rhetoric that masks the enormous variability that underlies Asian students' abilities, cultures, histories, and experiences (McGee, et al., 2017). Advanced placement English courses, comprised mostly by white students, draw upon more cultural capital than general curriculum world history courses, comprised primarily of ethnic/racial minorities, and likely further widen ethnic/racial and socioeconomic gaps in social and cultural capital (Nunn, 2011). Although no studies to our knowledge have examined the relation between ability tracking or course placements and ERS messages, it is possible that physical and social distance between ethnic/racial groups can subtly promote mistrust among students.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Our proposed link between the AGD and ERS would greatly benefit from empirical studies testing their relation. An interdisciplinary, mixed-methods research agenda is necessary to capture the subtle ways that racial/ethnic socialization in micro settings relates to ideologies and discourses in macro contexts (Rogers, et al., 2021), particularly those that are as unacknowledged and uncontested as the AGD (Carey, 2014; Ochoa, 2013). Such methods could uncover how covert racialized structures pertaining to educational discourse unfold in day-to-day settings and social interactions and how they serve as contexts for ERS. Raciolinguistics (Rosa & Flores, 2017) and language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) approaches in combination with ERS research can be particularly useful in documenting how students' language practices in school contexts are racialized. For instance, one study showed that the school's testing and tracking structures reinstitutionalized a raciolinguistic ideology of anti-Blackness in which students held lower standards for language abilities for Black students than immigrant non-Black students who were learning English as a second language (Sung, 2018). Such research sheds light on how culturally

situated activities organize language interactions that convey the meaning of race and ethnicity to students.

We also recommend that scholars minimize gap-gazing when they study the achievement gap from different angles, and thus reinforcing "damage-centered" scholarship (Tuck, 2009). Instead, researchers ought to shift away from deficit inquiries and toward those that document cultural strengths, socialization practices, linguistic repertoires, and other forms of funds of knowledge that students from different backgrounds bring to their classrooms (González et al., 2005). Methods that give voice to marginalized communities and allow them to tell stories about their lived experiences on their own terms provide insights to researchers whose methodologies and theoretical frameworks may not have captured those perspectives otherwise. Such efforts fundamentally require decolonizing mainstream research assumptions and methods in psychology by embracing novel ways of knowledge production and studying historically marginalized communities outside dominant Eurocentric discourses. Culturally and historically grounded scholarship can challenge AGD in policy and education settings and can inform teacher education and pedagogy with the hope of restructuring social systems in ways that address how racist perspectives remain at the core of educational inequities. Doing so can both affirm the cultural strengths and bolster the ethnic-racial pride of marginalized students.

In order for strength-based research to gain prominence in psychology and other disciplines, policy makers and funding agencies must support projects focused on culturally grounded educational benchmarks and measures, and be open to scholarship that challenges racialized systems bolstered by neoliberal projects for educational reform (e.g., standardized testing). Reimaging and revising educational measures necessarily require education leadership. Policy makers and funding agencies might reflect on the end goals of schooling: what kinds of outcomes do they envision with their efforts? What types of school environments, policies, curricula, and pedagogies help students feel empowered to pursue their own talents and interests, promote cultural socialization and racial pride, and equip students with skillsets to challenge systems of oppression? How can educators embed educational content that promotes knowledge of students' histories, languages, and cultures, while encouraging agency, curiosity, and problem solving as well as collaboration, communication, and empathy? Such end goals of schooling—also referred to as 21st century skills—capture holistic learning experiences, and may promote cultural socialization.

Finally, promoting cultural and ethnic-racial pride in schools requires flipping the script on how educations, students, and scholars frame conversations about educational ethnic-racial and socioeconomic disparities in academic outcomes. In what ways are schools failing students, rather than students failing in schools? In what ways are schools not prepared to serve students, rather than students not prepared to learn in school? This reversal in emphasis has the power to frame discourse on academic achievement in ways that affirm students' ethnic-racial identities and shifts the responsibility on to institutions to promote equitable opportunities for minoritized communities.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed how messages about ethnicity and race can emanate from unacknowledged macro level Discourses, particularly the AGD. Although our efforts represent the beginning stages of bridging multiple disciplines to examine the complex ways that ERS operates at multiple levels of society, we hope our work inspires scholars to expand their methods and scope of inquiry to

include broader cultural, ideological, and structural processes and contexts integral to the examination of ERS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for our colleagues at the City University of New York's (CUNY) Faculty Fellowship Publication Program (FFPP). Specifically, we extend our many thanks to Mark McBeth, the faculty mentor at FFFP, and our interdisciplinary group of faculty fellows across CUNY: Sara P. Alvarez, Carrie Hall, Marcela Ossa Parra, Meghmala Tarafdar, and Missy Watson. Thank you for your emotional support, your copious and generous feedback, and your brilliant nuggets of wisdom. A special thank you to Mark McBeth for the insanely delicious homemade lunch we devoured during ourbi-weekly feedback sessions.

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How to cite this article: Kuchirko Y. & Nayfeld I. (2021) Ethnic-racial socialization in the context of the achievement gap discourse. *Journal of Social Issues*. 77:1174–1187. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12488